

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 12-16 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 11 was previously canceled. Applicants note, however, for the Examiner's clerical correction, that the Examiner has rejected all of claims 1-16.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 5, 8-11, 15 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Coha (6,505,644) in view of Imaeda (2001-0003995). In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 5, 8 through 11 and 15 through 16 under 35 USC 103 (a) over Coha ('644) in view of Imaeda ('995), and claims 2 through 4 and 12 through 14 under 35 USC 103(a) over Coha and Imaeda in view of Fujiwara.

Solely to advance prosecution of particular embodiments of the present invention, Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 10 to more clearly define that that only the straight portion having a fixed cross section thereof is disposed between respective two neighboring bellows portions in the plurality of bellows portions. Additionally, these claims recite that that the straight portion disposed downstream of one bellows portion has a length equal to or more than that of the bellows portion disposed upstream of the said straight portion.

This configuration is quite different from Imaeda et al. In the Imaeda et al. reference ('995), the fuel hose 30 is configured so that each cylindrical circular component 31 is disposed between two bellows components 33 thereby providing an inter-connection between each bellows component 33 and the adjacent non-circular component 34 as disclosed in the paragraph [0046] of the reference.

Thus, as an entire hose, any axial movement of the hose is restricted by the non-circular component 34 as described in the paragraph [0048] of the reference. As such, a sound generates in the bellows components 33, and in addition, turbulence occurs in a portion changing from the cylindrical circular component 31 to the non-circular component 34 and in a portion changing from the non-circular component 34 to the cylindrical component 31 accompanying generation of sounds there.

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Further, the length of the cylindrical circular component 31 is extremely short in its length compared with that of the bellows component 33. Hence, the sound generated in the bellows component 33 cannot be silenced by the downstream cylindrical circular component 31 and would be made louder between the bellows components 33.

In the present invention, as recited in independent claims 1 and 10, there is disposed only a straight portion having a fixed cross sectional area between one and the other neighboring bellows portions, and since the straight portion downstream of the respective bellows portions is formed to have a length thereof equal to or more than that of the upstream bellows portion, any sound generating in the respective bellows portions could be attenuated to sufficiently be silenced. Therefore, as a whole, the fuel transfer can exhibit a great silencing effect compared with the fuel hose of the Imaeda reference.

This feature is not disclosed and suggested by the Imaeda reference or the other Coha and Fujiwara references. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims distinguish over the cited references.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

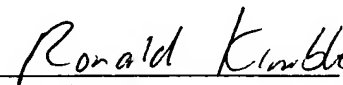

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